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Strengthening field representation of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Strengthening field representation of the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/97/1).

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STRENGTHENING FIELD REPRESENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
CCPOQ	Committee on Programme and Operational Questions
CSN	Country Strategy Note
DDSMS	United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services
DG/DIEC	Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECDC	Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EPTA	Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICSC	International Civil Service Commmission
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JCGP	Joint Consultative Group on Policy
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LDCs	Least Developing Countries
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OUNS	Office of the United Nations System Support and Services
TAB	Technical Assistance Board
TCDC	Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
UNCHS (HABITAT)	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNICs	United Nations Information Centers
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNU	United Nations University
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO/PAHO	World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO:	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United Nations system presence in the field has been its visible arm, especially for technical cooperation and in support of national capacity building. Field representation has expanded significantly in terms of the number of field offices, the number of representatives and staff and expenditures. More recently there was a surge in emergency field representation. Parallel to that, the United Nations General Assembly and other legislative bodies have issued detailed and specific directives, primarily with regard to coordination within the United Nations system.

Yet in spite of these directives to strengthen coordination in the field in support of programme countries and in spite of attempts by the United Nations family to work towards that end, the desired results have not been fully achieved. In many cases, the proliferation of offices and representations of the different United Nations organizations continues, and adds to difficulties in coordination for both the United Nations system and the host countries with inherent dangers of duplication and waste.

Considering mounting concerns by Member States to have a more efficient and effective United Nations family as a unified force in support of the host countries and at a time of diminishing resources the Inspectors believe that some corrective measures should be taken by all parties concerned and at different levels and locations. This will have to be considered within the overall attempts to restructure the economic, social and related sectors of the United Nations taking account of the roles of actors in the field, Headquarters, the host countries and the donor communities.

The broad objective of this report is to promote a more unified, and not necessarily a unitary, United Nations force in support of the programme countries in their efforts at capacity-building to achieve self reliance and sustainable human development, using available resources both human and financial, most effectively and economically. This review focuses on operational activities. It refers, but does not discuss at large other elements including emergency and peace-keeping situations or regional and subregional activities. The conclusions and recommendations cited below are mainly in summary form. The details and specifics are found in the body of the report.

A. The United Nations System: Field Level

♦ Conclusion

The quantitative growth in field representation has not been commensurate with qualitative changes in support of the programme countries. It has added to difficulties of achieving a more efficient and effective United Nations system field presence. It has increased pressure on the management capacities of host countries. Successive United Nations resolutions did not solve this problem and differing interests and competition among the organizations have continued (chapters I, II, and III).

The Inspectors recommend that all organizations of the United Nations system especially those represented in the field should intensify their efforts towards a more unified, effective and efficient presence. Within this context they have the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Inspectors recommend that:

(i) organizations should refrain from having new representations and make use of existing common representations especially through the resident coordinator;

(ii) organizations should harmonize as much as possible their respective geographical representations at the regional and subregional levels;

(iii) organizations and governments should seek to harmonize and then reach a basic government agreement covering all United Nations presence.

Recommendation 2

The Inspectors recommend that the efforts of the United Nations organizations should lead to a single United Nations official, the Resident Coordinator, representing the whole United Nations family, speaking with full authority on its behalf and being held fully accountable to it. This official should have:

(I) the correct qualifications and experience. Section G of Chapter IV (paragraphs 55-65) recommends measures covering criteria regarding resident coordinators including selection and designation;

(ii) the appropriate and timely technical and specialized support from all United Nations organizations in the field, especially regional economic commissions and other regional or subregional presence, and from Headquarters.

♦ Conclusion

(I) many of the field representations were founded as a result of the expansion of an organization's activities, and/or to represent and promote that organization's "interests" because they felt that the resident coordinator, being UNDP resident representative, concentrated more on UNDP matters at the expense of other organizations' activities. This, however, led to personality clashes, turf fighting and competition for diminishing resources at the expense of effective and economical support to host countries (paragraphs 39-43).

(ii) the phenomenon of "mandate creep" especially in cases of funds and programmes "encroachment" on mandates of specialized agencies and regional commissions were cited by representatives of the latter organizations (paragraph 47).

(iii) variations in approach, structure, periodicity and effectiveness of the interagency meetings and field committees were observed by the Inspectors (paragraphs 48-51).

(iv) there are gaps in the vertical and horizontal exchange of information between Headquarters and the field and within them. This poses difficulties in taking common positions on similar issues or lack of knowledge of some basic information.

Recommendation 3

(I) the Inspectors recommend that Executive Heads of Agencies and Organizations start a process of designating all "Representatives" other than the Resident Coordinator as "Directors" or "Senior Technical Advisers" who would continue to advocate and promote activities related to their respective organizations' mandates but would be part of a team under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator for the benefit of the host country.

(ii) the Inspectors further recommend that funding organizations should stress their basic role as funding and managerial organizations depending on technical and specialized agencies as partners in the programme and project cycles.

(iii) the Inspectors recommend that interagency meetings and groups eminating from them be better structured with clear mandates, division of labour and purposes. This will strengthen team work and a sense of ownership where representatives other than the resident coordinators

should chair, according to their specialization and technical knowhow some of these group meetings.

(iv) the Inspectors recommend that the United Nations organizations should reach an agreement on guidelines for the minimum and required information that should be exchanged among them on mandatory basis.

♦ Conclusion

Thematic groups with a lead agency, as well as area development groups with a lead agency, have proven their effectiveness. They benefit from division of labour, specialization and complementarities. They also spread leadership roles among the different organizations and hence the sense of ownership in a well defined team work (paragraphs 44-47).

Recommendation 4

The Inspectors recommend that thematic groups with a lead agency be further strengthened in the context of a well-defined and well-planned division of labour, responsibilities and complementarities. Both field and Headquarters should be involved in this effort on a sustained basis. The host country's role and involvement, during all stages is vital.

♦ Conclusion

Common premises are potentially conducive to enhanced cooperation and coordination. They also trigger a "multiplier effect" by encouraging common services which are objectives in their own right. These services are enumerated and discussed under Section H of Chapter IV (paragraphs 64-67). Common premises, and more so common services, could constitute the backbone for a more efficient and cost-effective United Nations presence in the field.

Recommendation 5

All United Nations organizations represented in the field should accelerate and intensify their efforts to establish and/or enhance common premises and common services taking into consideration elements discussed and recommended in paragraphs 64-67. Host governments should also have a more proactive role in the realization of such schemes.

B. The United Nations System: Headquarters Level

♦ Conclusion

Support by Headquarters to the field and more particularly to the resident coordinator system has not been systematic and adequate. In certain cases conflicting messages are received from different quarters. Financial support by UNDP to the resident coordinators is well appreciated and is being put to good use but has not, in itself, been sufficient to redress the deficiencies (paragraphs 70-76).

Recommendation 6

Concomitant with the process leading to a single United Nations system Representative in the field (recommendation 2 above) the Inspectors recommend that,the Secretary-General, in consultation with ACC, designate a single high official at the United Nations Secretariat to be in charge of the resident coordinator system. They further recommend that:

(i) the head of the newly grouped department, on economic and social matters, in the United Nations Secretariat and whose rank may be upgraded to that of Deputy Secretary-General, should assume this responsibility on behalf of the Secretary-General. He/she should have a clear mandate and the right resources both human and financial;

(ii) he/she should be supported by a unit established for this purpose, at no additional cost, comprising those personnel in the Secretariat presently responsible for the operational

activities plus those of United Nations Support Services (OUNS) attached to the UNDP Administrator. The unit should also benefit from other staff seconded from the different organizations which would allow team work and sense of ownership at Headquarters with trickle down effect to the field.

(iii) other United Nations organizations should, through their representatives/liaison in the Secretariat be able to participate in a "board-like" manner in the decision-making process;

(iv) resident coordinators may, eventually, be jointly financed by all organizations of the United Nations system.

C. The Host Country

♦ Conclusion

The primary responsibility and involvement of the host country in technical cooperation and coordination with the United Nations system and others is paramount. However, situations differ from one country to another and from one group of countries to another. Strengthening the United Nations system presence in the field is not an end itself. It is to support and respond to the host country's needs and demands. The role of the host country in assuring the most economical use of United Nations resources is extremely important. This assumes a strong and an effective government coordinating machinery.

Recommendation 7

For more efficient operations and more effective coordination the Inspectors recommend that host countries consider:

(I) the creation of an interministerial "committee" or group composed of representatives of sectoral ministries and departments. (The Chairman of this Committee would be the counterpart to the resident coordinator). This kind of mechanism is already in place in some countries and has proven its effectiveness.

(ii) communications from sectoral ministries and departments to respective United Nations organizations be cleared and/or copied to the ministry in charge of coordination, e.g., Planning, Foreign Affairs or Finance.

(iii) the creation of such mechanisms and/or enhancement of their capacities should be part of the United Nations system support to the host country.

D. The Donor Community

♦ Conclusion

Donor countries and multilateral institutions have a major role to play within the context of development assistance. United Nations multilateral assistance constitutes only a small fraction of official development assistance (paragraphs 101-102).

Recommendation 8

The Inspectors recommend that coordination, at the field level, with both bilateral and non-United Nations multilateral donors be more institutionalized by the parties concerned, especially between the United Nations system and the multi-bi community. Developed and developing countries should be partners in development with shared responsibilities including, on the part of donors, continued and predictable financial contributions.

E. Legislative Bodies

♦ Conclusion

Field officials are flooded by different legislative directives on operational activities for development and Member States do not always

adopt consistent positions in different legislative bodies (paragraph 103).

Recommendation 9

The Inspectors recommend that Member States at different legislative bodies scrutinize and harmonize decisions. They further recommend that a more vigorous monitoring of the decision-making process be undertaken by all legislative bodies of the United Nations system with ECOSOC having a primary responsibility for coordination and harmonization.

POSTSCRIPT

The draft of this report was dispatched to Executive Heads of all the JIU participating organizations including the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 12 March 1997.

On 17 March 1997 the Secretary-General sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly (A/51/829) bringing to the attention of Member States his immediate management and organizational measures. Those included directions for greater integration of United Nations activities at the country level. The Secretary-General's proposals coincided with most of the Inspectors' conclusions and recommendations. However, they would like to add that in this report the Inspectors advocate detailed and specific measures to be undertaken not only by the United Nations Secretariat but also by the other organizations in the United Nations system. This report also discusses interrelationships among the field, Headquarters, host countries and donor communities.

The Inspectors hope that this report will assist Member States and the JIU participating organizations in their quest for a more effective and efficient United Nations field representation.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report on the subject of field representation is in response to growing concerns voiced by Member States in different fora including, the United Nations General Assembly (lately resolution 50/120); ECOSOC, successive UNDP/UNFPA Executive Boards and other legislative bodies of the United Nations organizations. The suggestion to carry out this review arose from one of the participating organizations of the JIU; namely, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

2. The concerns of Member States include, as a high priority, the reingineering and strengthening of field offices to deal with both new and persistent challenges due to global political and economic changes against a background of universally shrinking resources and budget cuts throughout the United Nations system.

3. The topic of the report has been the subject of an on-going dialogue. It also fits into the wider picture of attempts towards the restructuring of the economic, social and related sectors of the United Nations system and more specifically the operational activities for development. This, as one study puts it, "is a frequently studied species and much is known to many".[1] The Inspectors therefore will try not to repeat work already done, although they will make use of such work; either as background material to highlight, on the one hand, how the "system" was conceived and developed and, on the other hand, how it functions in the field. Within that context the Inspectors will identify a number of relevant issues and mechanisms as well as examples of good practices to be followed, and then arrive at appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

4. **The report therefore focuses on basic issues bearing directly on the broad objective of a more unified and powerful United Nations family in the field as a force in support of programme countries in their efforts at capacity-building to achieve self-reliance and sustainable human development, using available human and financial resources most effectively and economically.** The Inspectors hasten to emphasize that the concept of a "unified family and force" in the field does not necessarily mean a unitary representation. Further more, this objective should be put into proper perspective: a strong and effective United Nations family in the field is not a goal in itself. Rather it is a means, albeit an important one, to a more efficient and effective response towards the development endeavours of the programme countries. What the United Nations family should pursue is a process of goal-oriented collaboration bringing the United Nations system together in support of goals and programmes that are defined and owned by programme countries.

5. Basic issues that this report looks into include: the resident coordinator system; cooperation between United Nations system representatives in the field; relationships between field offices and Headquarters; support to host countries; complementarities and division of labour on an interagency basis to cope with the specific needs of the country(ies) of assignment; efficient and effective use of tools and mechanisms such as Country Strategy Note (CSN), thematic groups and field committees, and rationalization and streamlining of administrative services on an inter-agency basis.

6. Chapter II outlines main trends, patterns and functions of field representation based on replies to the JIU questionnaire. Chapter III traces the evolution of the concepts of resident coordinator and the resident coordinator system, based on the relevant legislative directives. Chapter IV, which is the main part of the report, concentrates on field representation and the resident coordinator system. It depicts how the United Nations family in the field is carrying out the tasks entrusted to its members, both individually and collectively. For that purpose a number of issues and mechanisms in place are discussed.

7. In conducting their review, the Inspectors sent all participating organizations a detailed questionnaire on the above issues. In addition, the Inspectors held consultations with

Headquarters officials of some organizations and visited a number of recipient countries to obtain first-hand information on the subject. It was through these missions and through personal contact with the governments and United Nations officials in the field that some of the more concrete conclusions and recommendations were reached.

8. The Inspectors record their special thanks to all the organizations which replied to the JIU questionnaire for this report. The contacts they made and the exchange of views with government officials and with various United Nations officials at different levels of authority, at both field and Headquarters were of special value. Representatives in the field were able to discuss the issues based on first-hand and accumulated experience. To all of them, the Inspectors would like to convey their sincere gratitude.

II. MAJOR TRENDS AND PATTERNS

9. This chapter describes the evolution of field representation within the United Nations system over the past few years. It focuses on major changes in the field presence of the organizations, measured through the number of field offices and staff, as well as the costs and pattern of representation, broken down by geographical regions.

A. Field Offices

10. Table 1 below illustrates the changing pattern in the number and geographical spread of field offices of the united Nations system between 1985 and 1995. Overall, there is a significant increase of close to 60 per cent in the total number of these offices during the ten-year period, with some variation among the regions.

Table 1. Number of Field Offices

Regions	1985			1995			1985/95
	Country Offices	Regional Offices	Total	Country Offices	Regional Offices	Total	% Increase of total
Africa	188	28	216	311	40	351	+ 63 %
Arab States	69	10	69	104	10	114	+ 65 %
Asia and the Pacific	111	18	109	170	25	195	+ 79 %
Latin America and the Caribbean	104	20	124	167	27	194	+ 57 %
Central and Eastern Europe	19	5	24	86	12	98	+ 308 %
Other geographical areas*	108	23	131	142	29	171	+ 31 %
TOTAL	600	104	704	980	145	1,125	+ 60 %

*Mainly Western Europe and North America.

B. Staffing Trends

11. Table 2 below illustrates increases in the number of United Nations system field staff in all regions during the ten-year period under consideration; the most significant increases being registered in Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 2. Number of Field Office Staff

Regions	1985		1995		1985/1995
	No. of staff	International Professionals	No. of staff	International Professionals	% Increase of total field staff
Africa	3,101	685	6,370	1,316	+ 105 %
Arab States	1,186	248	1,700	360	+ 43 %
Asia and Pacific	2,619	495	3,386	540	+ 29 %
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,972	679	2,361	745	+ 20 %
Central and Eastern Europe	456	136	1,439	336	+ 216 %
Other	62	15	62	15	-
Total	**9,396**	**2,281**	**15,300**	**3,428**	**+ 63 %**

12. Considering Tables 1 and 2 above, the main rationale for this upward trend appears to stem from:

(a) increased field representation: some organizations have strengthened the identity and independence of their field presence by establishing fully-fledged autonomous offices headed by their representatives.

(b) emergence of new recipient countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where the number of field offices increased from only three in 1985 to 32 ten years later;

(c) expanded humanitarian operations, particularly in Africa, where the number of field offices of humanitarian programmes increased sharply during the ten-year period. (Reflecting the upsurge in refugee problems world-wide, UNHCR offices in all regions more than doubled from 79 in 1985 to 186 in 1995); and

(d) the decentralization process within the United Nations system as mandated by the governing bodies and recommended by the JIU in a 1992 report.[2] Most organizations have strengthened their field presence, including some small specialized agencies (ITU, IMO, UPU).

13. It is important to note, however, that the picture varies somewhat among the organizations. While UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR and UNFPA all registered staff increases in virtually all geographical regions from 1985 to 1995, the figures for UNDP show reductions

during the same period: 12 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean; 11 per cent in the Arab States, and 3 per cent in Asia and the Pacific.

14. The composition of field staff, in terms of locally-recruited and internationally recruited staff, is also changing, with the latter category showing a downward trend from 26 per cent of total field staff in 1985 to 23 per cent in 1995. This trend could be explained by the shift towards national execution and the increased use of local capacities in the delivery of field programmes.

15. The increased use of local capacities appears to be corroborated by Table 3 (CCPOQ table) below, which tracks the staffing trends within the System from 1974 to 1994 by groups of organizations with similar or proximate mandates. The data clearly indicate that while the field staff of the operational subsystem, especially the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) members, have been on a steady increase during the twenty-year period in question, the field staff of the technical, specialized agencies (both large and small), have taken a downward trend since 1989. That year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 44/211 which introduced the policy of national execution across the board. UNDP followed by introducing major changes in the tripartite system of project execution arrangements and agency support costs. However, it should be kept in mind that the figures in Table 3 include project staff, whereas Table 2 includes data mainly for field office staff.

Table 3. Twenty-year staffing pattern: 1974-1994*
(Non-headquarters staff in brackets)[1]

	1974	1977	1980	1983	1986	1989	1992	1994
United Nations (including UNCTAD, UNDCP, UNEP, HABITAT, UNITAR, etc.	11,436 (7,017)[2]	12,888 (8,302)[2]	15,209 (10,257)[2]	16,205 (11,171)[2]	14,211[3] (9,126)[2]	13,721 (9,123)[2]	14,233 (9,467)[2]	14,710 (9,056)[2]
Funding Organizations (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF)	2,151 (1,313)	6,286 (5,344)	7,288 (5,961)	7,941 (6,513)	8,766 (7,318)	9,282 (7,358)	10,087 (8,341)	11,287[4] (9,059)
UNHCR/UNRWA/WFP	705 (175)	887 (380)	1,952 (1,262)	2,673 (2,980)	3,112 (2,263)	3,751 (2,791)	4,161 (3,139)	5,028 (3,647)
Large Specialized Agencies (FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WHO/PAHO)	17,273 (8,705)	16,741 (8,019)	17,156 (8,658)	17,133 (8,526)	16,837 (8,400)	16,016 (8,100)	15,298 (7,607)	15,058 (7,236)
UNIDO[3]	-	-	-	-	1,632 (285)	1,643 (397)	1,714 (421)	1,493 (383)
Small Specialized Agencies (ICAO, UPU, ITU, ITC, WMO, IMO, IAEA and WIPO[5])	3,630 (847)	4,253 (892)	5,011 (1,163)	5,158 (1,095)	5,313 (1,013	5,250 (937)	5,169 (868)	5,071 (660)

1. Based on CCAQ(PER) annual statistical reports (World Bank and IMF are not included). For comparison purposes UNU, ICSC, ICJ, ICAT, IFAD and GATT have been excluded. Numbers represent professional/general service staff in all locations with contracts of over one year and covered by United Nations common salary system.
2. Not comparable with other "field" categories due to inclusion of UNEP, HABITAT, etc., as non-headquarters stations.
3. UNIDO included in United Nations statistics up to 1985.
4. Includes UNOPS.
5. From inception in 1975.

* Table prepared by CCPOQ.

C. Costs of Field Representation

16. Table 4 below shows a growth in nominal terms of close to 200 per cent in the costs of field representation during the ten-year period considered. This growth is attributable mainly to the operational programmes (JCGP) of the System and appears to reflect somewhat the significant increase in the overall expenditures especially humanitarian operations during the same period.

Table 4. Costs of Field Representation*

(In thousand $US)

Regions	1985		1995		% Increase 1985/1995	
	Organization	Host Government	Organization	Host Government	Organization	Host Government
Africa	71,332	3,002	243,317	5,119	+ 241 %	+ 71 %
Arab States	32,368	6,898	77,553	7,445	+ 140 %	+ 8 %
Asia and the Pacific	36,369	4,323	106,629	5,982	+ 193 %	+ 38 %
Latin America and the Caribbean	62,282	6,506	118,716	11,294	+ 91 %	+ 74 %
Central and Eastern Europe	2,411	21	20,769	120	+ 761 %	+ 471 %
Other Geographical Areas	6,528	-	55,303	-	+747 %	-
Total	**211,290**	**20,750**	**622,287**	**29,960**	+ 195 %	+ 44 %

* WHO data not included and for the regional commissions only data for ECLAC subregional offices have been included.

D. Pattern of Field Representation

17. The present pattern of field representation, as illustrated in Table 5 below, shows that 10 organizations are represented at the country level, 12 have subregional or area representation and 14, including the five regional commissions, have broad regional focus. Five of the organizations are represented at both country and regional or subregional level, with FAO being represented at country, subregional and regional levels. In addition, seven organizations have no field representation of their own. It should be noted that IMO and UPU, which are among the smallest technical agencies of the System and previously had no field presence, have recently established regional advisory positions.

Table 5. Pattern of Field Representation

1. Organizations at country level	FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, IBRD, UNFPA, ILO
2. Organizations with subregional/area representation	ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ICAO, ILO, ITU, FAO, UNESCO, UNDCP, UNHCR, IBRD, WHO
3. Organizations with broad regional representation	All economic commissions, IMO, WHO, FAO, UPU, WMO, UNICEF, ICAO, UNEP, ILO
4. Organizations represented at both country and regional or sub-regional level	FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, ILO
5. Organizations without their own field representation or represented by UNDP/Resident Coordinator	UNDDSMS, UNCTAD, ITC, IAEA, WIPO, UNEP, WTO

Table 6. Field duty stations with significant United Nations system Presence, or seat of regional/subregional office(s)

1. Africa	Addis Ababa, Abidjan, Accra, Brazzaville Dakar, Kinshasa, Nairobi
2. Arab States	Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Manama
3. Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok, Islamabad, Jakarta, New Delhi, Manila
4. Latin America and the Caribbean	Brasilia, Kingston, Lima, Mexico City, Port of Spain, Santiago de Chile

18. The pattern of subregional and regional representation for the System as a whole is extremely complex, and conforms to no logical blueprint of cooperation and coordination among the organizations. As stated in a 1986 JIU report, the process of establishing field offices has been evolutionary, responding to decisions by independent agencies without collegial consultations. "Considerations of infrastructure, particularly communications, have influenced choices; political influences have had their play; incentives offered to locate in a particular country may unduly influence a decision; and the standard of living conditions in prospective countries have a gravitational pull. The Inspectors believe that these tendencies, understandable as they are, deserve to be scrutinized for their overall effect. Indeed there can be no doubt that further increases in field representation by the United Nations system will multiply dealings with governments, put more stress on their negotiating resources, add to logistical problems and generally make coordination more difficult. It is necessary, therefore, to view objectively the entire arrangements for field representation in the United Nations system and to reassess the needs as they flow from present circumstances".[3]

19. That conclusion remains as valid today as when it was reached by the JIU ten years ago, considering in particular the highly variable degrees of delegated authority exercised by field representatives at different levels; the significant disparities in their grades (from USG/ASG to P-5); the uneven territorial jurisdictions of subregional and regional offices; the differences in the level of resources at their command; and their commitment/disbursement authority; etc. These factors clearly hinder progress towards collaborative and integrated approaches at various levels of the System's field representation.

20. Special field duty stations with significant United Nations system presence are yet another important factor to be considered in seeking to strengthen the coherence and cost-effectiveness of the System's field representation.

21. The duty stations shown in Table 6 are special cases because of the relatively large concentration of United Nations system offices and operations, and because they are either the global seat (Nairobi), or regional/subregional seats of United Nations system field presence. Consequently, they do not fit into the normal arrangements for cooperation and coordination at the country level under the Resident Coordinator system. The case of Amman, Jordan, merits some careful attention in this regard as the Executive Secretary of ESCWA chairs interagency meetings of regional nature while the Resident Coordinator continues to chair meetings at the country level.

E. Basic Representation Agreements

22. The Inspectors reiterate a previous finding regarding the lack of a central government policy in many countries for the conclusion of representation agreements with individual organizations. It was found that such agreements had been concluded piece-meal at very different dates by different sectoral ministries with their individual counterpart organizations without the benefit of an overall coherent legal framework that would be similarly applicable to all the organizations represented at the country level. Differences in representation agreements and the disparities in the benefits or advantages they offer tend to obstruct the search for cohesion within the System's country representation.

23. This chapter and the tables therein indicate increases in the numbers of offices and staff, and in costs. Although some of the reasons behind such increases are due to the establishment of offices in new recipient countries and to the expansion of humanitarian and other activities, the increase in full-fledged representation and autonomous offices dealing with operational activities is considered to be, in the Inspectors view, the main reason for such trends. As noted in paragraphs 18 and 19 above, such trends add to the problems inherent in coordination processes by the United Nations system and the recipient countries. The situation is compounded by the uneven territorial jurisdictions of the organizations' subregional and regional coverage, which leads to deficiencies in harmonization and coordination, as well as to the lack of a standard governmental agreement

regulating the presence of the United Nations organizations.

24. The Inspectors therefore recommend that:

(i) organizations should refrain from having new representations and make use of existing common representations especially through the resident coordinator;

(ii) organizations should harmonize as much as possible their respective geographical representations at the regional and subregional levels;

(iii) governments and organizations should seek to harmonize and then reach a basic government agreement covering all United Nations presence.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM

25. The resident coordinator system is considered to be the substantiation and managerial centerpiece of United Nations system presence and operations at the country level. In this chapter, the Inspectors briefly trace the development of this concept through successive resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly; highlight the major benchmarks; and examine, especially in Chapter IV how these directives have been dealt with most notably within the context of coordination for the benefit of the host country.

26. The "Tripartite Consensus" of 1970 [GA resolution 2688(XXV)] gave a coordinating and leadership role for the UNDP resident representative. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 1977 carried this further. Paragraph 34 of the annex to the resolution stipulates:

"On behalf of the United Nations system, overall responsibility for, and coordination of, operational activities for development carried out at the country level should be entrusted to a single official to be designated taking into account the sectors of particular interest to the countries of assignment, in consultation with and with the consent of the government concerned, who should exercise team leadership and be responsible for evolving, at the country level, a multidisciplinary dimension in sectoral development assistance programmes. These tasks should be carried out in conformity with the priorities established by the competent national authorities and with the assistance, as necessary, of joint interagency advisory groups. Subject to the requirements of individual countries, steps should be taken to unify the country offices of the various United Nations organizations".

Subsequently, the ACC decided that the title of this single official should be Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System's Operational Activities for Development.

27. Following up on the same resolution (32/197), the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation (DG/DIEC) was created in 1978 with broad responsibilities for promoting greater coherence and effectiveness by the United Nations system and with direct responsibilities for resident coordinators in the field.

28. The resident coordinator system was formally put into effect with the designation of the first 71 officials who were to be responsible to the Secretary-General in the exercise of their functions as outlined in paragraph 34 of resolution 32/197 quoted above.

29. General Assembly resolution 44/211 brought in the element of strengthening and fully utilizing national capacities. It emphasized that:

- "the United Nations system at the country level should be structured and composed in such a way that it corresponds to ongoing and projected cooperation programmes rather than to the institutional structure of the United Nations system";

- It also called upon the ACC "to reinforce the team-leadership capacity of the Resident Coordinator within the United Nations system at the country level for the integration of the sectoral inputs of the System and for the effective and coherent coordination of the response of the United Nations system to the national programme framework"; and it asked for the reinforcement of the team leadership capacity of the resident coordinator and the need to improve the field representation of the United Nations system.

30. General Assembly resolution 47/199 was more specific on the role and functions of the resident coordinator system. It emphasized a number of factors for effective functioning of the system including: clear and improved division of labour; commitment of representatives in the field to work together and to respond to specific needs of countries. It also introduced in the mechanisms of a Country Strategy Note (CSN) and field level committee.

31. General Assembly resolution 50/120 emphasized the need for simplification and harmonization of programme and budget

cycles, and rules and procedures for operational activities for development; the enhancement of the responsibility and authority of the Resident Coordinator for the planning and coordination of programmes to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to the needs of the recipient countries; the adoption of a programme approach and use of the CSN, where in place, as the common framework for country programmes of United Nations system organizations; the establishment of field-level coordinating committees; the use of common premises and services in the field; and coordinated follow-up to global conferences.

32. At the end of 1992 the Office of DG/DIEC faded away. In July of 1994, the Secretary-General requested the UNDP Administrator to assist him in ensuring development policy coherence and in enhancing coordination including the strengthening of the resident coordinator system (SG/SM.5380 of 27 July 1994). Subsequently, the Administrator established the Office of United Nations Support and Services (OUNS) to provide management support to resident coordinators and their functions.

33. The ACC and, in particular, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) have been at the centre of elaborating principles and guidelines on the functions and operations of the resident coordinator system. A number of relevant documents have been issued by ACC over the years including that of 17 October 1994 and in March 1996.

34. **Studying the above and other related resolutions, the Inspectors note the following:**

(i) there has been a progressive process where resolutions have become more specific and detailed, especially with regard to the different roles of organizations, and hence the coordination of operational activities in the field which in turn became increasingly more complex in view of the proliferation of United Nations offices and representation;

(ii) on the other hand, there has been a regressive development, starting with a call for the unification of country offices and the departure from that call as can be demonstrated by the proliferation of offices and the increase in number of representatives;

(iii) recent resolutions have been the result of consensus building and hence compromise, to meet different "interests" of different parties and, therefore, are open to different interpretations, adding to difficulties in coordination and in achieving a unified United Nations force in support of the programme country;

(iv) in spite of the fact that resolution 50/120 does not encourage the establishment of different offices in new locations, this practice continues unabated; and that

(v) there is a trend among organizations to upgrade the presence and status of their representatives which adds to difficulties in coordination and team work, and hinders the leadership role of the resident coordinator.

IV. FIELD REPRESENTATION AND THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM

35. As a result of their field missions, it became apparent to the Inspectors that most representatives and officials within the United Nations family were addressing themselves to their relationship with the resident coordinator and not to the more encompassing concept of the resident coordinator system, in spite of the legislative directives, communications from several headquarters, and related literature on the subject. In the opinion of Inspectors, this misperception is serious because representatives do not see themselves as part of the System but rather as separate and independent entities who deal or have to deal with the resident coordinator, either out of obligation when the need arises or for the sake of keeping up appearances. The absence of a team spirit and work can be aggravated in certain cases by inabilities to assert the leadership role of the resident coordinator. Moreover, different sectoral ministries and departments continue to deal directly, at policy level, with their respective counterpart organizations or their representatives, which may undermine the concept of the resident coordinator system. Such situations may not have been as prevalent in the past where the United Nations family structure was less complicated in that it was more tightly webbed with clearer division of labour, complementarities and lines of authority. Although this general picture is offset by some good practices in the field, it will continue to hamper the smooth, effective and economical use of resources if not addressed at different levels. The Inspectors therefore urge the continuous inculcation of a culture of a United Nations family in the field as a united force, and not as a divided and competing members.

36. Having pointed out a general but critical and persistent problem, the Inspectors will now deal with more specific issues and mechanisms. As mentioned earlier, and contrary to the general picture just portrayed, the Inspectors find good practices to be pointed out and emulated. They also find some difficulties and problems to be overcome and rectified.

A. Growth in Field Representation

37. As observed in Chapter II, the System's field offices and field staff have expanded significantly over the past ten years. In many cases this has added to the challenge of improving the coherence and integration of operational activities in the field.

38. Activity areas and actors to be coordinated have multiplied, both within and outside the United Nations system at the country level. There has been an exponential growth of local and international non-governmental actors. Parallel to the expansion of the System's field presence is a perceptible worsening of fragmentation and duplicative tendencies in the establishment of new offices, fielding of personnel, use of resources and concomitant programmatic pressures on host Governments.

39. This situation has arisen mainly due to historical developments, whereby a number of organizations individually embarked on expanding and upgrading their presence in the field. In many cases such trends were either encouraged or implicitly accepted by the host country. This is compounded by the fact that legislative bodies of the different organizations take decisions, including establishment of new offices, without an overall guiding policy by the United Nations system.

- The conclusions and recommendations stipulated in Chapter II apply.

B. Mandates, Division of Labour and Complementarities

40. United Nations resolutions and decisions speak of respect for the separate and distinct mandates of every United Nations organization. The organizations themselves emphasize and advocate their distinct and specialized roles. On the other hand, the scope and area of work of organizations in carrying out their respective mandates overlap. Some point to the phenomenon of "mandate creep". This in turn tends to create a divided family, with each organization advocating and promoting its own programmes and activities. It becomes more

critical in an environment of competition for shrinking resources.

41. Therefore, the respect for specific mandates should be looked at within the framework of the interests and needs of the host country, and how best the United Nations family can respond to the changing needs of that country. This could be achieved, *inter alia*, through proper division of labour and complementarities, addressing the specific needs of the host country. Such formulae of cooperation and coordination are demonstrated by a number of practical steps and processes adopted in some field locations including thematic or area development groups with a lead agency

C. Thematic Groups and a Lead Agency

42. The thematic group approach has, on the whole, proven its success. The ingredients of success are embodied in the initial agreement reached among the different organizations for the purpose of carrying out a programme whereby each organization has a specific task or tasks to carry out according to plan and in coherence with others. The whole exercise is conducted and led by a lead agency whose mandate and expertise are deemed essential for the success of a programme. But in certain cases, the Inspectors found some deficiencies in application, mainly due either to clash of personalities involved and/or leadership ineffectiveness. Such problems have to be addressed primarily by representatives in the field and by Headquarters when necessary. Examples of thematic groups could be cited, including in basic education (where UNESCO is the lead agency); in sanitation (where either UNICEF or WHO is the lead agency) and in UN/AIDS (where WHO is usually the lead agency).

D. Area Development and a Lead Agency

43. In some field locations the concept of a priority region within a country or area-based development programme, like that of a thematic group, seems to lend itself to efficient and probably effective interagency cooperation and coordination. The Sinai Integrated Agro-Settlement Programme (SIAP), conceived by the Egyptian Government, is a good example. On the United Nations side, UNDP was the funding organization, with three United Nations implementing agencies: FAO as lead agency, ILO and UNESCO. Activities related to this programme were not limited to these agencies, but did benefit from other United Nations organizations including UNV, UNICEF, WHO and WFP. Equally, if not more importantly were the contributions made by a number of sectoral ministries from the governmental side, especially through expertise from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources.

44. It is evident to the Inspectors that thematic groups with a lead agency is a tested and successful approach. This, and the notion of area development based on functional coordination seems to lend itself to practical and pragmatic processes for having a more unified force. However, such approaches have to be well worked out and planned with the right balance and mix of complementarities among the organizations and with a clear and undisputable leadership. It strengthens the *esprit de corps* and distribution of leadership roles among organizations and their representatives.

45. The Inspectors recommend that such approaches be continued but on firmer and more equitable basis to enhance not only more effective delivery of programmes and projects but also to cement family ties within and among the organizations and their representatives as well as with the recipient country.

E. Funds and Programmes versus Specialized Agencies

46. One of the problems brought to the attention of the Inspectors by some representatives, including those of regional economic commissions, was what they considered as the "encroachment" of funds and programmes on the mandates of specialized and technical agencies. As mentioned earlier, this was also referred to as "mandate creep". It was stated that numerous activities carried out in partnership with funds and programmes in the past have gradually given way to a trend where the programmes assumed either direct execution or assumed leadership roles within an interdisciplinary/interagency activities. But

such developments did not come about abruptly and neither side could be held solely responsible. It is known that specialized agencies benefiting from extrabudgetary resources and funds-in-trusts became less dependent on, for example, UNDP in their technical cooperation activities and projects, which also led to an increase in the agencies' field representation. UNDP started to lose its central role as the main funding organization. It is also known that UNDP, became more involved in direct execution, e.g., Office of Project Services (OPS). The establishment by UNFPA of the Technical Support Services (TSS) and the Country Support Teams (CSTs) in 1992, an interagency and interdisciplinary mechanism for technical cooperation, had a direct effect on resources previously available to regional commissions and some specialized agencies. Irrespective of arguments put forward by those involved it seemed to the Inspectors that the principles of division of labour and complementarities called for in United Nations resolutions were not always met.

47. The Inspectors recommend that funding organizations should stress their basic role as funding and managerial organizations (whether to have one central funding agency for the United Nations system is a matter to be seriously considered) depending on specialized and technical agencies as partners in the programme and project cycles, i.e., planning, identification, implementation, evaluation and follow up.

F. Interagency Meetings and Field Committees

48. United Nations resolutions and directives from different United Nations organizations request field representatives to coordinate their activities in a more coherent manner in response to national plans and priorities of the recipient countries. One of the major mechanisms to ensure this has been through interagency meetings and the establishment of field committees at the field level, usually under the leadership of the resident coordinator. In a number of cases subgroups meet under the leadership of the representative of the lead agency, whose technical and specialized role is recognized. This encourages team work and a sense of ownership.

49. In the countries visited, the experience is not monolithic. Variations do exist according to approach, structure, periodicity, and effectiveness.

50. In almost all the countries visited, such interagency meetings have something in common, at least in terms of classifications and duties. They include thematic working groups which deal with a variety of subjects including: poverty, basic education, UN/AIDS, gender issues, and public information. On the administrative side such groups may include: common premises, services, data base; United Nations Library; travel; electronic system; security; and others.

51. The Inspectors would like to record some of the views and observations of a number of United Nations representatives on the following meetings and modalities for cooperation and coordination:

- The meetings of Heads of Organizations in the field were not always timely, regularly scheduled or well-structured. Some representatives in one country voiced concern as to the cost-effectiveness of the frequency of such meetings while others complained about their infrequencies;

- It was also noted that at many of the Heads of Organizations' meetings representation was at much lower level, which leads one to believe that either such meetings are not being taken seriously or are being intentionally undermined by neglect;

- One representative after a long interagency meeting, and after a number of decisions were taken to create more interagency working groups, observed that groups and committees are continually being created, but there did not seem to be any tangible results;

52. The Inspectors recommend that interagency meetings and groups be well structured, with clear mandates, division of labour and purposes all of which should enhance cooperation and coordination. This will strengthen team work and a sense of

ownership where representatives other than the resident coordinator should chair, according to their specialization and technical knowhow, some of these group meetings.

G. Resident Coordinator

53. The resident coordinator system was formally established in 1981 with the designation of the first 71 officials. The resident coordinator was responsible to the Secretary-General in the exercise of his/her functions, as outlined in successive United Nations resolutions. With the adoption of the Tripartite Consensus in 1970, the UNDP resident coordinator was recognized as the "leader of the team" and the "central coordinating authority for the development assistance programmes of the United Nations system".

54. The evolution of the concept of resident coordinator and resident coordinator system was discussed above. Through their field missions and personal contacts, the Inspectors are in a position to elaborate on issues related to these concepts but with new elements and insights. They hasten to add that it is not only the resident coordinator who should be the focus of attention but also other field representatives.

55. **(1) Selection of Resident Coordinators**: The Inspectors observe that there is a general agreement that the net for the selection of resident coordinators should be cast on a wider scale. Operative paragraph 37 of A/RES/50/120 of 20 December 1995 deals with encouragement of wider participation in the pool of candidates; greater governmental involvement; the selection process; their performance; and training. UNDP reports that as of 1993, almost one-third of resident coordinators are from or have worked in an organization other than UNDP; yet there were some observations and remarks by other United Nations representatives that the calibre of the resident coordinators needs more scrutiny. The Inspectors believe that:

(a) Not all UNDP staff who reach a certain level in their careers should automatically be nominated as resident coordinators. Even a good resident representative may not automatically be a good resident coordinator. Comparisons with other representatives and their qualifications and seniority in the same field location may have to be considered. The overall quality of resident coordinator corps has to be further upgraded.

(b) The agencies also have to be more involved in the selection process of future resident coordinators. It is not enough that they clear names submitted by UNDP. Some agencies are rarely consulted, as is reflected in their responses to the Inspectors' questionnaire. On the other hand, two reasons were given by some United Nations officials in the field concerning their lack of enthusiasm to submit their candidature for a resident coordinator post: (i) they are apprehensive of losing their seniority in their respective organizations, which could negatively affect their careers and (ii) they are not willing to shift from what they consider a substantive to a managerial role. In spite of that, one United Nations official suggested that some staff members have to make a "sacrifice" for the sake of the "System" as a whole, and ultimately, for the benefit of the host country.

(c) One cannot speak of the resident coordinator in isolation. The post or the incumbent has to be considered within the context of the resident coordinator system. Therefore, the qualifications and willingness of other United Nations officials in the field as well as at Headquarters (especially at the senior levels) to cooperate and coordinate are essential. For the resident coordinator to succeed a culture of team work must be developed and each member of the team has to feel that he/she is a party to a common ownership.

56. **(2) "Dual Role" or "Two-Hats" Syndrome:** The question of the resident coordinator being the resident representative; priorities and loyalties and distribution of time and effort within that context, are issues raised by non-UNDP officials. In certain cases, such as in Honduras (and probably in other field locations) this "conflict of interest" has been solved by assigning most of UNDP's activities to the Deputy Resident Representative. Under such arrangements, the resident representative devotes more time for his/her work as resident

coordinator and is seen more as the "Leader" of a "Team".

57. **(3)The Grading of Resident Coordinators**: The grading of resident coordinators in comparison to other representatives in the same field location is another issue which was brought to the attention of the Inspectors. It was suggested that if the resident coordinator has a lower grade than the other United Nations representatives the kind and intensity of cooperation needed may be affected. In the opinion of the Inspectors it is therefore advisable that the resident coordinator should be at the same or higher grade compared to other colleagues in the field except in special locations where offices such as the regional commissions are headed by Under Secretaries-General.

58. **(4) Training**: In collaboration with ACC/CCPOQ and the International Training Centre (ILO) in Turin, Italy, UNDP embarked upon a series of training packages for resident coordinators and other organizations' representatives in 1994. These include first-term and experienced resident coordinators, and senior Headquarters staff. The interaction and exchange of experiences among the participants have been evaluated positively.. However, some of the participants who thought highly of the exercises were sceptical about their impact and applications in the field. This may call for an assessment by UNDP and others involved of "lessons learnt".

59. **(5) Performance Appraisal:** A number of United Nations organizations, and in particular the UNDP, are planning to introduce a performance appraisal system for resident coordinators as distinct from their roles as resident representatives. The Inspectors encourage these plans and believe that other representatives in the field should also be subject to the same appraisal with a view towards group appraisal which should assist the United Nations organizations to place the proper and complementary mix of skills in the field.

60. **(6) Criteria for Designating Resident Coordinators**: All of the above elements and observations (paragraphs 55-61), plus the personalities of the representatives involved, should contribute to the formulation of criteria that resident coordinators should posses.

61. The Inspectors recommend that elements, measures and observations elaborated above (paragraphs 53-59) concerning selection of resident coordinators; dual role; grading; training; performance appraisal and other criteria be taken up and agreed upon by Executive Heads of organizations to govern future selection and designation of resident coordinator.

H. Common Premises and Services

62. Successive General Assembly resolutions on operational activities for development include specific provisions on this subject in recognition of the fact that integrated facilities and services would facilitate the achievement of coherence and integration of the organizations' operations at the country level. A 1994 JIU report on the subject provided a comprehensive overview of the state of progress in this area.[4] The report noted that some progress was being made in the development of common premises, but that considerable ground still remained to be covered. The main obstacles identified include:

- difficulties experienced by host Governments in providing the necessary premises or land to build common United Nations system office accommodations;

- different representation agreements that accorded uneven advantages and privileges to the organizations, including free accommodation to some and not to others; and

- difficulty of achieving common premises for all or most organizations represented in special case duty stations, where regional commissions and other regional offices are located (as shown in Table 6 above).

63. The report also found however, that even in those duty stations where the organizations were located in common premises, they did not automatically develop common programme support services because of discrepant regulations, rules and procedures among them. Nevertheless, the importance of

common services in field programme support functions is increasingly recognized by the System, not least because of their cost-saving impact. The development and consolidation of these services should therefore constitute a major function of the resident coordinator system. UNDP has established common service accounts which appear to be working satisfactorily in several countries and other organizations should establish common service budget lines and accounts to facilitate the pooling of common service costs. Common service "models" being developed in New Delhi, Islamabad and Pretoria, for example, could lead to the perfection of an integrated field programme support system including pouch/mail, travel, transportation, local personnel recruitment and administration, data bases, procurement, information services and documentation, conference services, printing, publications distribution and sales, etc.

64. Some services requiring close attention as special candidates for integration include:

(i) Local recruitment and administration of personnel, whereby agencies offer different salary scales and employment conditions for local staff employed at the same duty stations. The Inspectors believe that these should be standardized and centrally administered within a common service framework;

(ii) Information services continue to be specific to each organization in the field and the central role of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) where they exist, is underutilized although in certain duty stations UNICs are designated as the lead agency in this field.

(iii) Common data bases constitute yet another area requiring significant efforts at field level, with the necessary strong support of respective Headquarters. The importance of such data bases for the sharing of programme information horizontally and vertically, including with organizations without field representation cannot be overstated. A number of field locations have an interagency group for consideration of such facilities although they may differ from one location to another depending on local availabilities of information systems and degrees of usage by different organizations.

(iv) Local procurement of goods and supplies holds great potential for savings within a common service framework.

(v) A common transportation pool, including preventive maintenance, repairs and management would require the harmonization of the organizations' different policies and procedures for the management, of field vehicles as an important programme resource.

(vi) Promotion, distribution and sales of the System's publications at the country level would require to be organized as a common service directly attached to the resident coordinator's office. The technical advice and support of the United Nations publishing service would definitely be useful in this respect.

(vii) Horizontal and vertical networking of United Nations system common services should be the ultimate goal in the organization and strengthening of field common services, with interdependent linkages at field level and with common services at major Headquarters duty stations, especially in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome and Nairobi.

65. It is clear that common premises when feasible (and the Inspectors believe that that should be the case in many of the field stations) are conducive to enhanced cooperation and coordination. They also trigger a "multiplier effect" on common services, which as enumerated above, could be the backbone for a more efficient and cost-effective United Nations family in the field.

66. All United Nations organizations represented in the field should accelerate and intensify their efforts to establish and/or enhance common premises and services, taking into consideration elements discussed and recommended in paragraphs (64-67) above. Host governments should also have a more proactive role in the realization of such schemes.

I. Country Strategy Note

67. Established in 1992, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/199, paragraph 9, the Country Strategy Note (CSN) is to be prepared on a voluntary basis by host governments in order to ensure the effective integration of assistance provided by the United Nations system into the national development process. The extent to which the CSN can achieve its intended objectives and impact positively on field-level coordination will depend ultimately on the number of countries adopting this instrument and the importance they assign to it. So far, only limited operational experience with the CSN is available and the Inspectors' field findings suggest that the CSN process should secure the leadership role of host governments and enhance the participation of organizations of the system, including those without country representation. Another JIU report has dealt more comprehensively with CSN formulation and application.[5] However, and as mentioned earlier, the involvement of the United Nations organizations, in some cases, have to improve.

J. Information

68. A number of United Nations officials, both at Headquarters and in the field including regional economic commissions stressed the importance of information and its timeliness as a factor for a more efficient and effective United Nations system. They pointed to the continued deficiencies regarding updated information about other organizations' major policy changes and directives from Headquarters that may have an effect on field relationships. This should not necessarily mean or lead to a situation whereby every piece of information has to be exchanged.

69. According to one suggestion what is important is to have a **mandatory** flow of information on issues and activities of a certain degree of importance for the United Nations system, whether horizontally and/or vertically; for example, resolutions adopted by respective legislative bodies; policy directives by the management of the different secretariats; and other major undertakings or changes. The flow of information when relevant should be extended to the host country as well as to donor countries.

70. The Inspectors recommend that organizations, possibly through the ACC should reach an agreement on guidelines for a minimum required information to be exchanged on a mandatory basis. This will facilitate transparency, common knowledge and a more unified family in the field.

K. Headquarters Support

71. The Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation (DG/DIEC) was created in 1978 in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 32/197. This was a central element in the process of the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, and a major institution in support of the resident coordinator and effective integration of operational activities at the field level. However, its mandate, resources and authority were limited and was discontinued in 1992.

72. In July 1994, the Secretary-General entrusted the UNDP Administrator with overall responsibility for assisting him in improving the coordination of operational activities for development, and in strengthening the resident coordinator system (SG/SM/5380 of 27 July 1994). Subsequently, the Administrator established the Office of United Nations Support and Services (OUNS) to provide support to the resident coordinator functions.

73. In 1995, the UNDP Executive Board approved a new facility by earmarking six per cent of total UNDP resources for support to the United Nations system and aid coordination.

74. Representatives in the field received directives from their respective Headquarters. In some cases, they received a joint directive, as in the case of the JCGP, for example, Harmonization of Programming Procedures; Common Country Assessment (CCA) of 22 December 1995 or other joint letters on cooperation (e.g., UNDP/UNIDO letter of 26 October 1996 on cooperation between UNDP and UNIDO). The number and variety of directives were, in the words of one representative, "unsettling".

75. From their analysis of relevant documents and their interviews in the field the Inspectors drew certain conclusions:

(i) The allocation of financial resources to reach six per cent of total UNDP resources, in support of the resident coordinator system, was welcomed by all representatives in the field, and especially by the resident coordinators. It has been put to good use in all countries visited especially for interagency activities in support of the host country.

(ii) A number of resident coordinators/resident representatives did not find in the OUNS the support envisaged and needed for the resident coordinator and the resident coordinator system. On the other hand, organizations and agencies other than the UNDP hardly gave any support to the OUNS. In the words of one representative, they "undermined it through neglect". It was not seen as an independent unit in support of the resident coordinator system, but rather as another arm of the UNDP.

(iii) A number of United Nations officials in the field intimated to the Inspectors that there was a gap between the written directives from different Headquarters in support of the resident coordinator system, and the more proactive support for their respective offices. There is more emphasis on strengthening individual organizations' presence probably at the expense of a more unified United Nations system force in the field. Hence the "turf fighting".

76. The Inspectors believe that support by Headquarters needs to be thoroughly examined and restructured. Although emphasis may be given to New York, support from the Headquarters of all organizations is also necessary. The Inspectors further believe that any attempt to strengthen and institutionalize headquarters support to the resident coordinator system will have to be made within the context of the restructuring of the economic, social and other sectors within the United Nations Secretariat. The Inspectors were delighted to know of the Secretary-General's proposal to group the three departments in question under one department, a proposal which confirmed their earlier direction on this matter.[5]

77. Concomitant with the process leading to a single United Nations system Representative in the field (recommendation 2 above) the Inspectors recommend that,the Secretary-General, in consultation with ACC, designate a single high official at the United Nations Secretariat to be in charge of the resident coordinator system. They further recommend that:

(i) the head of the newly grouped department, on economic and social matters, in the United Nations Secretariat and whose rank may be upgraded to that of Deputy Secretary-General, should assume this responsibility on behalf of the Secretary-General. He/she should have a clear mandate and the right resources both human and financial;

(ii) he/she should be supported by a unit established for this purpose, at no additional cost, comprising those personnel in the Secretariat presently responsible for the operational activities plus those of United Nations Support Services (OUNS) attached to the UNDP Administrator. The unit should also benefit from other staff seconded from the different organizations which would allow team work and sense of ownership at Headquarters with trickle down effect to the field.

(iii) other United Nations organizations should, through their representatives/liaison in the Secretariat be able to participate in a "board-like" manner in the decision-making process;

(iv) resident coordinators may, eventually, be jointly financed by all organizations of the United Nations system.

L. Resident Coordinator and Emergency Situations including Humanitarian and Peace-keeping

78. It is a fact that in the last few years, the role of the resident coordinator has grown beyond programme matters, especially in countries facing civil strife, instability or those which are in transition. He/she has to deal increasingly with security, humanitarian, electoral and other issues.

79. During one of the missions an Inspector's attention was drawn by the two persons concerned (the resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator)in a joint session to the futility and even embarrassment of having a resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator serving the same country and apparently duplicating work. Fortunately, at the end of the resident coordinator mission the UNDP did not appoint a replacement. While this may be confined to only one example, the Inspectors believe that such a situation should not be repeated, and that better coordination and mutual agreement be reached between UNDP and DHA on this subject, which is covered more elaborately in another JIU report.[7] Furthermore, the attention of the Inspectors was drawn to the relevant work being finalized by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on humanitarian matters. Reference is also made to the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the JIU regarding coordination in emergency[8] and peace-keeping situations.[9]

80. The Inspectors noted and would like to commend the successful way by which UNHCR cooperates with and puts to optimal use the expertise of organizations like UNICEF and WHO for immunization and WFP for food.

M. Host Country

81. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/120 of 16 February 1996 on operational activities for development stipulates:

> "(12) Emphasizes that the recipient governments have the primary responsibility for coordinating, on the basis of national strategies and priorities, all types of external assistance, including that provided by the multilateral organizations, in order to integrate effectively such assistance into their development process;"

82. It is the Inspectors' view that the resident coordinator system should continue to seek, when necessary and when requested, to strengthen the governments' coordination mechanisms and structures as an integral function of national capacity-building for self-reliance.

83. It is a fact that governments' development, management and coordination capabilities differ significantly among countries and categories of countries, and that the demand for the resident coordinator's services varies accordingly. At one end of the spectrum are countries with comparatively limited demand for the System's coordination services because of their government's well-developed and effective coordination mechanisms, both at the level of the central government and that of the sectoral ministries. At the other end are countries with barely functioning governmental institutions, and where the services of the resident coordinator are not only very much in demand, but also tend to cover a broader range of activities and actors, often including bilateral donors. Between the two extremes are countries where the governments may decide to make selective use of the resident coordinator's functions for the integrated programming and implementation of external inputs.

84. However, irrespective of these categories, and as observed by the Inspectors in their field missions, the fact that sectoral ministries and departments continue to deal directly with their respective counterpart organizations (and vice versa) without a central "clearing house" and coordination mechanism, poses a major problem for the sound coordination and optimal use of resources. The Inspectors do not advocate that such contacts should discontinue. They could be better regularized. Two ideas which reinforce each other were put forward by government and United Nations officials:

(i) The creation of an interministerial "committee" or group composed of sectoral ministries and departments. (The

chairman of the committee would be the counterpart to the resident coordinator). This kind of mechanism is already in place in some countries and has proven its effectiveness.

(ii) Communications from sectoral ministries and departments to respective United Nations organizations be cleared by and/or copied to the ministry in charge of coordination, e.g., Foreign Affairs, Planning, or Finance.

85. The Inspectors recommend that host governments should pursue the efficacy of these two suggestions and work out probably in cooperation with the resident coordinators, the best practice in accordance with their needs and demands.

V. TOWARDS A STRENGTHENED UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE IN THE FIELD

86. As stated in the introduction, much has been written and much is known to many on this subject. A number of specific conclusions and recommendations were advanced in the previous chapters. In this final chapter the Inspectors will attempt to draw upon those conclusions and recommendations and put them and other broader recommendations into a more cohesive unit or "model".

87. In spite of directives by the United Nations General Assembly and other legislative bodies to strengthen coordination in the field in support of programme countries, and in spite of attempts by the United Nations family to work towards that end, the desired results have not been fully achieved. In many cases, the proliferation of offices and representation of different United Nations organizations continue and add to difficulties in coordination for both the United Nations system and the host country. Their efforts are scattered with inherent dangers of duplication and waste and ultimately higher costs to all concerned.

88. Considering all factors, and at a time of mounting concerns by Member States to have a more efficient and effective United Nations family and at a time when resources are diminishing, the Inspectors believe that some bold steps need to be taken by all the parties concerned. This is not limited to the field. It has to be within the overall move towards the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. Although the Inspectors' concern is focused on the field, it goes beyond that to other major parties: Headquarters, the host countries and the donor community.

A. The United Nations System at the Field Level

89. The Inspectors advocate having a single responsible United Nations official representing the whole United Nations family and speaking with full authority on its behalf, and hence gaining the respect and cooperation that are essential for carrying out the tasks entrusted to him/her. He/she should be fully accountable to the United Nations system (family) either collectively and/or individually; not only to a single organization. For this official to 'be effective and successful certain prerequisites are essential:

(i) Qualifications and experience: The official should have the appropriate qualifications and experience as stipulated under Chapter IV Section G on the question of the resident coordinator.

(ii) Technical and specialized support: He/she should be supported by the sectoral technical and specialized advice when needed. Modalities could vary from one country to another. Such expertise could be available in the country nationally or through the presence of relevant technical specialized United Nations agencies but not representatives; subregional or regional presence/advisers including those from regional commissions (Analysis of the regional dimension especially the role of regional commissions and other regional and subregional United Nations offices were discussed in previous JIU reports.[10] The reader is also referred to the Nordic Project in this regard[11]). It should also be sought at short notice or pre-scheduled missions from agencies concerned. This was the case when the resident representative/resident coordinator could directly draw on the expertise of the Senior Agricultural Advisor of FAO and the Senior Industrial Adviser (SIDFA) of UNIDO, all located in the same office, with clear lines of authority and without loosing their respective roles as advocates for their organizations. This continues to be the case in a number of locations including arrangements within the JCGP.

90. If it is a question of representation and advocacy whereby some organizations believe that the resident coordinator does not fully represent them or is more tuned to UNDP matters at the expense of their own, then this could be overcome by a number of measures, including the process of designation and selection of a resident coordinator. The

Inspectors observed that when certain organizations upgraded their "Directors" to "Representatives", more difficulties in coordination and in the concept of a United Nations "family" were encountered. They are not sure whether any incremental advantages regarding advocacy were worth the negative effects it left behind. Many of the sensitivities and personality clashes may be solved by resorting back to titles of "Directors", instead of "Representatives" which would result from that.

91. Another important element in this configuration would be the drive towards common premises and common services as discussed in Chapter IV Section H. This, when achieved, would be the backbone for a united presence in support of the host country. Needless to reiterate the apparent advantages of cost-effectiveness which would result from that.

92. All of the above would not only bring together the scattered resources in the field, cement the relationships among officials of different organizations, and optimally benefit from their respective specializations and complementarities, but would also intensify the credibility and authority of the United Nations family and the resident coordinator. It would also serve the host countries in a more efficient and effective manner.

93. This approach will not work in isolation. It will have to get the support of Headquarters. It will have to have the proper interaction with programme and donor countries.

B. The United Nations System at Headquarters Level

94. The Inspectors traced the historical developments of headquarters support to the resident coordinator in Chapter III, including the designation of Director-General and then the UNDP Administrator on behalf of the Secretary-General to supervise and support the resident coordinator system.

95. Based on various evaluations and on recent feedback intimated to the Inspectors, the two experiences fell short of desired objectives.

96. For the kind of field representation advocated and recommended above the Inspectors believe that a single high official at Headquarters with proper functions should be considered. The Inspectors recommend that the idea of having a Deputy Secretary-General in charge of operational and related activities be considered by Member States with the proper mandate, authority and resources. The specialized agencies and organizations should be involved in this process.

97. This official would be the person in charge of the grouped departments in the Secretariat. He/she would be supported by a unit, comprising those personnel presently in charge of operational activities plus those of OUNS now attached to the UNDP Administrator, The unit may also be staffed by personnel seconded from the different organizations. Representatives of the different organizations to the Secretariat may serve in a "board-like"manner.

C. Host Countries

98. The main objective of the United Nations family in the field is to respond to the needs and demands of the host countries in a timely, efficient and effective manner.

99. The role of the host country in assuring the most economical use of the United Nations resources at the field level is extremely important. This assumes a strong and effective single government machinery dealing with multilateral cooperation rather than dispersal of responsibilities on a sectoral basis among different ministries and departments along the lines of the United Nations specialized agencies and organizations. It does not necessarily follow that sectoral ministries and specialized agencies would not continue to interact. Rather the decision-making process would have to be centrally controlled.

100. This would mean that the capacity of the host country, or more particularly the central machinery therein, should be strengthened and enhanced. The United Nations system can play a more pivotal role in that respect by taking into consideration the different situations in different groups of countries.

101. The Inspectors recommend that programme countries consider the ideas put forward in this regard in Chapter IV, Section M especially, since the government is and should continue to be the main authority in the decision-making process throughout all stages related to technical assistance.

D. The Donor Community

102. In most if not all field stations the donor community plays a major role in coordination of multi-bi activities. There is an interaction, with varying degrees of intensity and effectiveness, from one country to another, with the United Nations system and, in particular, with the resident coordinator system.

103. Moreover, donor countries play a major role in the legislative bodies of the United Nations organizations. They do that individually collectively, and effectively. It is the Inspectors' opinion that the drive for reform of the United Nations system should continue to be a major concern. Both developed and developing countries should be partners in this endeavour, and both should shoulder their responsibilities, including, on the part of donors', financial contributions on predictable and timely manner.

E. Legislative Bodies

104. The Inspectors traced major benchmarks in the United Nations General Assembly resolutions concerning the resident coordinator and resident coordinator system. Some directives by legislative bodies (including the United Nations General Assembly triennial policy review and their outcome), although progressively more practical, are likely to be subject to different interpretations by different actors serving their respective needs; hence the possibility leading to conflicts which may render them inoperative. There continue to be gaps in orientation and direction among different legislative bodies within the United Nations system, as Member States do not adopt consistent positions in different legislative bodies. Therefore, these anomalies have to be rectified partly through more vigorous monitoring and decisions by ECOSOC and the United Nations General Assembly but also through more rigorous coordination within each Member State. As mentioned earlier, issues on policy formulation and coordination were the subject of a recent JIU report.[12]

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OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

Letter dated 10 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the delegations of the Republic of Angola, Brazil, Chile, Fiji, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and of my own, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an information note on the Independent World Commission on the Oceans.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 39.

(Signed) Antonio MONTEIRO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Information note on the Independent World Commission on the Oceans

1. At its nineteenth special session, the General Assembly reviewed progress achieved over the five years that have passed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Apart from its debate on the broad issues of globalization, economic development, technology and finance, the General Assembly centred its most substantive sectoral discussions on fresh water, forests and climate change. The discussions seem, however, to have missed the interconnection that exists between these three subject areas and the ocean, which forms the heart of the Earth's biosphere. The Commission on Sustainable Development will specifically address the oceans and seas as a sectoral theme at its 1999 session. The present session of the General Assembly, therefore, is an opportune moment to introduce the work of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans. Its report is due to be completed during 1998, the International Year of the Ocean, and is timed to contribute to the 1999 review by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Background

2. A large number of organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, are concerned with a specific aspect of the oceans - such as law and the settlement of disputes, environment, scientific research and training, fisheries, shipping and tourism. However, no one organization or body, with the exception of the General Assembly, has attempted to look in an integrated way at the complex, multifaceted problems of the oceans. Both policy makers and the public at large remain either ill-informed or indifferent to the vital importance of the world's oceans to the health of the global environment and to economic and social development. It is from this perspective that Dr. Mário Soares, then President of the Republic of Portugal, took the lead in launching the Independent World Commission on the Oceans in Tokyo in December 1995. The Commission takes its place in a long series of independent commissions concerned with economic and social development, environment, peace, equality and human rights. Its purpose is above all to alert the public and world leaders to the role of the oceans in planetary survival, to the threats facing the oceans and to more peaceful and sustainable use of the oceans, as well as to suggest ways of strengthening the legal and institutional framework for ocean governance at the national, regional and global levels.

Activities

3. The Commission, in keeping with the multifaceted nature of the issues, brings together 40 distinguished persons. It is holding plenary sessions in six coastal cities around the world, located in: Japan, Brazil, the Netherlands, the United States of America, South Africa and Portugal. It has also organized a series of multidisciplinary study groups with the participation of outside experts for in-depth discussions on a number of key ocean issues. As with previous commissions, the members act in their personal capacities, which allows them to take independent positions. The Commission has created its own web site

on the Internet in order to inform the Internet users about its work, to provide a link to other public and private organizations dealing with the oceans and to generate feedback from visitors to its site.

4. The Commission considers that the peaceful uses of the oceans within the exercise of sovereignty of States is of growing importance as an exploding world population and a growing seaborne economy press on a finite ocean space. It is examining the practicality of new approaches to preventing or resolving disputes over maritime boundaries and conflicting claims on ocean resources.

5. The Commission is committed to promoting the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - the legal and institutional framework for the oceans - and to enhancing its effectiveness, taking into account the respective roles of the General Assembly, the specialized agencies, the Commission on Sustainable Development, regional organizations and national Governments. It takes as its point of departure the need to fulfil the goals and objectives set out by the Rio Earth Summit and embodied in Agenda 21, especially in its chapter 17 on the oceans, and takes into account the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.

6. With respect to economic concerns, the Commission is looking at how far contemporary economic theory can be applied to ocean management in the context of sustainable development, at the national, regional and global levels and is assessing the effectiveness of alternative policy instruments in improving the way humans treat the oceans.

7. In the realm of science and technology, the Commission will consider the present state of the oceans, their interaction with other elements of the global environment and the application of ocean science and its technology to the exploration of the ocean and the protection of the marine environment.

8. Differences in levels of social and economic development mean that countries differ in their ability to benefit from uses of the ocean and to adjust to changes in the marine environment. In the spirit of greater solidarity between all countries, so as to achieve more equity among them, the Commission is examining the merits of alternative capacity-building schemes and other ways of redressing these imbalances, including their North-South dimensions.

9. Cutting across all of these issues is the Commission's overall aim of stimulating an awareness on the part of the general public and of politicians and decision makers in all sectors of civil society. Some new approaches have to be followed in order to ensure a greater involvement of all actors in ocean affairs. The possibility of devising some systematic strategy in this areas for the next century has to be considered. This would be consonant with concrete steps to be taken in order to ensure the peaceful and sustainable use of the oceans in the next century.

Outputs

10. The outputs of the Commission are expected to contribute to the international debate on the oceans taking place in various intergovernmental and non-governmental forums. Its final report will be based on the conclusions and recommendations that it will derive from the above study groups, as well as from in-depth discussions among Commission members themselves and from external contributions. The Commission's concluding session is being organized in Lisbon in the framework of the International Year of the Ocean, 1998 and in conjunction with Expo '98: "The Oceans: A Heritage for the Future".

11. The Commission will submit the results of its work to the General Assembly in 1998, when it considers the International Year of the Oceans, so as to contribute to the Assembly's recommendations concerning the future of the oceans and to those of the Commission on Sustainable Development when it takes up the oceans and seas as a sectoral theme in 1999.